

## IN THIS EDITION



Town ready for holiday events. See page 3.



Town receives grant for recreation center. See page 4.

## TOWN HALL CALENDAR

Dec. 7: Town Council regular meeting (7 p.m.)

Dec. 15: Town Council regular meeting (7 p.m.)

Dec. 23-25: TOWN HALL CLOSED (CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY)

Jan. 4: Town Council regular meeting (7 p.m.)

Meetings are in the Council Chambers in building B at Town Hall, 900 7th Ave. Town Council regular meetings are recorded and broadcast (not live) on GTV11 (Time Warner 11, AT&T U-verse 99).

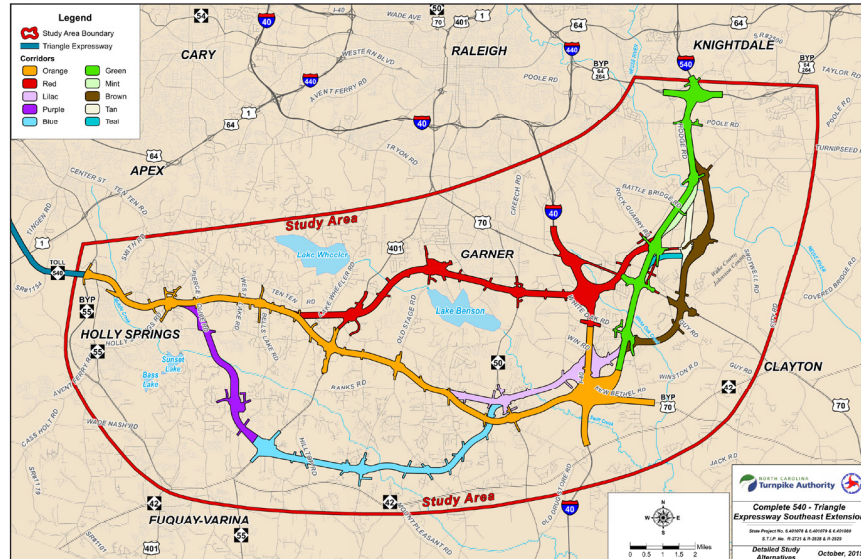


/townofgarner

December 2015

# GARNER UPDATE

Vol. 83, No. 89



NCDOT is studying a total of 17 different possible routes for the southeast segment of the 540 Triangle Expressway.

## NCDOT Plans Series of Meetings on Expressway

NCDOT is planning public meetings on the 540 Triangle Expressway project. This work will extend the expressway from Apex to Knightdale, completing the 540 Outer Loop around greater Raleigh. Three public meetings and one public hearing are scheduled for Dec. 7-9:

**Monday, Dec. 7**  
Barwell Road Elementary School  
3925 Barwell Road  
6-8 p.m.

**Tuesday, Dec. 8**  
Holly Springs High School Cafeteria  
5329 Cass Holt Road  
6-8 p.m.

**Wednesday, Dec. 9**  
Wake Tech Community College Student Services Building, Room 213/214  
9101 Fayetteville Road  
Meeting 4-6:30 p.m.  
Hearing 7 p.m.

The draft Environmental Impact Statement—or EIS—and supporting maps are now available for review at [ncdot.gov/complete540](http://ncdot.gov/complete540). Printed copies of the EIS and maps showing the detailed study alternatives are also available for review at the Garner Planning Department at Town Hall. Town leaders are urging NCDOT to construct the southeast portion of 540

please see 540 on page 4



To get the latest news from the Town, follow us on Twitter (@TownofGarner).



## A Message from the Mayor



You can watch the mayor's award-winning "Great People in Garner" on demand at [youtube.com/townofgarner](http://youtube.com/townofgarner).

As you may have heard or read (see article below), our town manager, Hardin Watkins, will be leaving

Garner next month to become Burlington's city manager.



Hardin has guided the Town with a steady hand over the last eight and a half years, and I am extremely grateful

for the job he has done. As he has observed, the Town has achieved many impressive things during his

tenure. Being named an All-America City in 2013 in Denver was certainly one of the highlights of my career as a Town official. And passage of the \$35.7 million bond program—which will fund a new police station, Town Hall, recreation center and lots of other projects—was a monumental event in the history of Garner.

In addition, I am thankful for the leadership Hardin showed in fighting the dreaded "red route" and in helping to save our library.

There are many other positive

things I could cite about Hardin's tenure if space permitted. Suffice it to say that I know Hardin will do a great job in Burlington. I wish him the best.

Speaking of best wishes, that's exactly what I would like to extend to you and your loved ones during this holiday season. May we all experience peace and joy, and may Garner continue to prosper in the year ahead.

*Ronnie S. Williams*

Ronnie S. Williams

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## Town Manager Accepts Position in Burlington

Town Manager Hardin Watkins is resigning his position with the Town of Garner and has accepted an offer from the City of Burlington, N.C., to serve as their next city manager. His last day with the Town of Garner is Jan. 4.



"My experience here has been wonderful, and I thank you for all of your hard work to make the Town of Garner the incredible organization that it is today," Watkins wrote in a letter to the Town's leadership team. "It has been a rewarding and exciting time to be a part of this dynamic and growing Town. The future for this community is extremely bright!"

Among the top team achievements Watkins noted in his letter were:

- the 2013 All-America City designation by the National Civic League;
- the Public Works Department's national accreditation from the American Public Works Association in 2014 (the first community in the state to receive that honor);
- CALEA national accreditation for the Police Department in 2008, 2011 and 2014;
- the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department's national accreditation from the National Recreation and Park Association this fall.



**Members of Garner's All-America City delegation pose in the state legislative building after receiving recognition from the N.C. Senate in July 2013. Outgoing Town Manager Hardin Watkins lists Garner's All-America City Award as one of the top achievements during his tenure.**

ation and Park Association this fall.

Watkins also highlighted the passage and ongoing implementation of the \$35.7 million bond program that will fund a police station, Town Hall, recreation center, park enhancements, greenways, sidewalks and other projects.

The Town Council will soon name an interim town manager then begin the search for Watkins' permanent replacement.





## Holiday Events to Bring Cheer to Downtown

The Town's two premier holiday events are almost upon us. On **Friday, Dec. 4**, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., join us on Main Street for **Light Up Main**, the Town's annual tree lighting. Santa and Mayor Ronnie Williams will flip the switch to the Town tree, welcoming guests to the event. This will be followed by a local holiday talent showcase with singers and dancers from the Garner area.

You'll have a chance to shop for Christmas goodies, make crafts, visit with Santa and, most important, make a donation to Toys for 'Lil' Troops, which will deliver new, unused toys to the children of deployed and low-income service members over the holidays. Each new toy you donate will enter you in a chance to win tickets to wonderful shows at Garner Performing Arts Center.

The annual **Garner Christmas Parade** takes place the next day, on **Saturday, Dec. 5** at 2 p.m. This year's parade theme is "Home For the Holidays."

Visitors to these holiday events may notice something different this year. The Garner Revitalization Association has partnered with downtown business GrafixHouse to have students from Garner Magnet High School's Art



The annual Christmas Parade in historic downtown Garner is scheduled for **Saturday, Dec. 5 at 2 p.m.**

Club paint holiday scenes on storefront windows in the historic business district.

Also this holiday season is Garner Performing Arts Center's annual **Brunch with Santa** on **Wednesday, Dec. 16** from 9:30-11 a.m. Learn more and register by going to [garnerperformingartscenter.com](http://garnerperformingartscenter.com).

## TOWN OF GARNER BOND PROGRAM

### Ballfield Facilities Get Upgrades

The Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department held a ribbon cutting for the new concessions building at South Garner Park on Nov. 18. Another new concessions building has been completed at Garner Recreational Park. Both projects were made possible by funds from recreational bonds approved by Garner citizens in March 2013.



Learn more about the Garner Bond Program at [garnerbonds.com](http://garnerbonds.com).





# Town Wins State Grant for Rec Center

The Town of Garner has been selected to receive a grant from the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) in the amount of \$217,500. The funds will be applied toward construction of the Town's new recreation center.

PARTF provides dollar-for-dollar matching grants to local governments for parks and recreational projects to serve the public. It is a primary source of funding to build and renovate facilities and parks, as well as to buy land for new and existing parks.

When the recreation center project was initially submitted and recommended for a grant in 2013, remaining PARTF funding was less than \$35,000. Instead of accepting this amount, the Town resubmitted for funding in 2014 and was awarded the \$217,500 matching grant. "Patience and timing were key in acquiring this grant," Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Director Sonya Shaw said.

"The Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department worked diligently with the public, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee,



**The planned recreation center at the corner of Main and Montague streets should be completed in the latter part of 2017.**

programming partners and Town staff to demonstrate strong public support for the project. We are proud to be recipients of this grant," said Assistant Town Manager-Operations Rodney Dickerson.

Construction on the recreation center, to be located at the corner of Main and Montague streets in historic downtown Garner, is expected to begin in spring 2016

and be completed in fall 2017. In addition to the PARTF grant, funding for the facility will come from a \$2.5 million donation by ConAgra, parks and recreational bonds approved by Garner voters in 2013 and special reserve funds set aside by the Town. The center will be 40,000 square feet and have three high-school-size gymnasiums, three multipurpose rooms and an elevated indoor walking track.

540

**continued from page 1**

along the so-called orange corridor (see map on page 1).

NCDOT will use data from the draft EIS as well as public comments to recommend a preferred alternative for the southeast segment of the expressway. NCDOT says it plans to announce the recommendation for the preferred alternative in the spring of 2016.

## Coming Soon: Town Hall Offices Moving

We're building a new Town Hall at the site of the existing one, so our department offices will relocate to 400 Aversboro Road and 914 7th Avenue during construction. We expect to move departments next month, though exact days/weeks have yet to be finalized. Look for updates at [garnernc.gov](http://garnernc.gov) and on our social media. The new Town Hall should open mid-2017.

